Import from South Korea

1756. SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently placed any orders for import of certain items from South Korea; and

(b) if so, the names of the companies the details of items to be imported and the foreign exchange involved on the import of each of these items?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Suspension of Tobacco Auctions in Karnataka

1757. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tobacco auctions were suspended in Karnataka during November due to agitation of growers; and

(b) if so. what are the reasons therefor and what steps have been taken to ensure that such incidents may not recur?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) On 1st Nov November, 1991, some growers in Periyapatna platform No. 5 in Karnataka had assaulted the buyers on account of the lower prices offered by them as compared to the price offered at other platforms. The tobacco offered for sale in this platform is generally of inferior variety. The traders then boycotted the auctions.

The Tobacco Board convened meetings with the growers and traders and finally it. was agreed to resume suctions on 14th November and the traders were assured of their safety. They were also advised to maintain steady price levels so that such incidents do not recur. As on 3rd December, 1991, the average price of tobacco auctioned was Rs. 40.54 per kg. as against the average price of Rs. 26.44 per kg. realised during last year.

Rubber plantation in Orissa

1758. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a great scope for increasing areas under rubber plantation in Orissa;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in that direction so far; and

(c) the details of the target set or scheme drawn up for rubber plantation in Orissa during the Eighth plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) There is scope for increasing areas under rubber plantation in Orissa. 2 lakh hectares of land have been identified as suitable for planting rubber. Actual planting has already been done in over 250 hectares. The measures taken to promote further rubber cultivation in orissa include:—

(i) Establishment of a zonal office at Bhubaneshwar and regio nal offices at Baripada and Berham pur and an extension unit at Dhen-kana.

(ii) Establishment of a Rubber Research Centre at Kamakhyanagar in Dhenkanal District and a Rubber Nursery at Ranibaro.

(iii) Promotion al campaigns by the Rubber Board in different rural parts of Orissa to create awareness about rubber among the farming community and motivate them to take up rubber cultivation.